

Message Text

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14

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-13 /085 W

----- 119030

R 021335Z JUL 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4034

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0522

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, PINS ET

SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION IN ERITREA: THE 70MILE-LONG BREAD LINE

1. DURING THE PAST WEEK THERE HAVE BEEN TWO DRYGOODS CONVOYS FROM ASMARA TO MASSAWA AND RETURN. EACH CONVOY CONSISTED OF UP TO 200 TRUCKS INCLUDING THE USUAL 18 FUEL TRUCKS. THEY TRANSPORTED TO MASSAWA SMALL QUANTITIES OF SESAME SEED, AND PULSES WHICH HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO ASMARA AFTER THE HARVEST FOR PROCESSING AND HAS BEEN WAITING MONTHS FOR TRANSPORTATION TO THE PORT. ON THE RETURN, THE CONVOYS BROUGHT TEFF, WHEAT, AND SURGHUM, WHICH HAS BEEN ACCUMULATING IN THE WAREHOUSE IN MASSAWA WHILE SUPPLIES IN ASMARA HAVE BEEN CRITICALLY DEPLETED.

2. THE FIRST TWO CONVOYS BROUGHT THE GRAIN PRIMARILY FOR THE
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ETHIOPIAN MILITARY AND THEN FOR THE GOVERNMENT WAREHOUSE. AS YET,

THIS GRAIN HAS NOT APPEARED IN THE LOCAL MARKET. IN ORDER TO EASE LOCAL PRESSURES, HOWEVER, THE EPMG AUTHORITIES HAVE AGREED TO A THIRD AND LARGER CONVOY, WHICH DEPARTED JULY 2. IT IS REPORTED THAT THIS CONVOY IS SPONSORED BY PRIVATE WHOLESALERS AND THAT THE GRAINS AND FLOUR WILL GO DIRECTLY INTO THE MARKET WITHOUT THE ONEROUS FORMALITY OF RATIONING. SCCT, SY, S RESTRICTED THE FLOW OF FOOD SINCE ITS IMPOSITION IN SEPTEMBER, 1975.

3. THESE CONVOYS MAY BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE UNTIL THE SURPLUS IN MASSAWA IS EXPENDED. THE HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS ON THE MASSAWA ROAD SEEM TO HAVE LITTLE DETERRANT EFFECT ON THE TRUCK OWNERS AND DRIVERS AS THE PROFITS ARE ATTRACTIVE AND THE TURN-AROUND TIME IS MINIMAL. ALTHOUGH SECURITY PRECAUTIONS FOR THE CONVOYS CAUSE THE NORMAL TWO-HOUR JOURNEY TO TAKE EIGHT HOURS, TO DATE, THE INSURGENTS HAVE NOT DEMONSTRATED ANY INCLINATION TO INTERRUPT THIS TRAFFIC.
WAUCHOPE

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Message Attributes

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